



5.0 FINAL RECOMMENDATION

This section details the major recommendations for the Northside Drive corridor over the next 25 years. As detailed in Chapter 4, these recommendations were developed through several avenues, including:

- Review of existing conditions and deficiencies;
- Input from citizens, stakeholders, and agencies;
- A comprehensive evaluation of potential impacts including estimates of future travel demand for all modes and environmental issues; and
- Consideration of land use policies and development goals in the corridor.

The needs of the corridor were discussed previously in Section 2.6, focusing on transportation, land use, and design. These recommendations meet those needs while adhering to the principles of the City's development policies as summarized below:

- Improve connections to retail, service, and other civic resources;
- Utilize existing infrastructure;
- Transform streets into attractive connections within and between neighborhoods; and
- Design safe and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

The final recommendations are organized into two major sections within this chapter and include the following land use and transportation elements:

Corridor Transportation System

- Multimodal transportation system with Bus Rapid Transit service and six travel automobile travel lanes on Northside Drive;
- Pedestrian system along Northside Drive including minimum 15' foot sidewalks, safe pedestrian intersection crossings and improved connections into adjacent neighborhoods; and
- Access management featuring a green median and limited curb cuts.

Land Use and Urban Design

- Increased land use intensities fronting Northside Drive up to 10 stories in height;
- Mixed land uses along the corridor;
- Major activity nodes at several existing intersections and transit stations; and
- New neighborhood gateways along Northside Drive.

For more detail on these and other recommendations please see the sections that follow.

In addition, a package of short-term improvements was developed, and is described in section 5.3.



5.1 Corridor Transportation System

A corridor transportation system comprised of multiple elements including streetscapes, safety enhancements, transit improvements, roadway capacity, and bridge improvements was developed as part of the final recommendation. These improvements were developed in tandem with the land use recommendations to maximize the effectiveness of the final recommendation with regard to both land use and transportation.

5.1.1 Typical Section

The recommended typical section is shown in Figure 3-1. As the figure indicates three general-purpose travel lanes are recommended in each direction. Minimum 15' sidewalks are included on both sides of the road and a landscaped median is included in the middle. The median width will vary depending on the presence of turn lanes at key intersections. Overall the typical section will vary between 110 and 126 feet.

5.1.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

These recommendations directly support the transit functions of the corridor, because walking and bicycling are the primary means for accessing transit in the future.



Streetscapes and wide sidewalks are recommended

Through the development of the land use plan and urban design characteristics, two primary pedestrian zones were identified: in the 10th Street Zone between 14th and Marietta streets and the entire Vine City MARTA Zone. These zones are expected to have the heaviest pedestrian volumes due to the proposed residential and commercial mixed uses and proximity to major pedestrian generators such as the GWCC. In addition to the pedestrian zones there are also several critical pedestrian intersections along Northside Drive, where it would be important to emphasize pedestrian crossing features as the intersections are improved. The intersections and the

pedestrian zones are shown on Figure 5-1. The Upper Westside LCI has provided specific recommendations for pedestrian crossing improvements at a number of intersections along Northside Drive. Please refer to that plan for more detail.

It should be noted that other portions of the study area would also have significant pedestrian activity and so the recommended improvements address the entire corridor. Specific recommendations are detailed below.



Figure 5-1: Pedestrian Functionality



High automobile volume on Northside Drive, together with significant topographical changes throughout the corridor, unfortunately make the corridor much less suited for bicycle travel than others such as Marietta Street and Howell Mill Road. This was confirmed by representatives of bicycle advocacy groups throughout the study process. However, while dedicated facilities for bicycle travel are not recommended by this study, we must anticipate that a segment of the bicycling population will still want to travel on Northside Drive, and the on-road facilities should try to make that experience as accommodating as possible.

For these reasons, the recommendation for bicycles on Northside Drive is a simple one: provide a wider curb lane throughout the corridor. As the roadway is improved over time for the other improvements recommended in this plan, the curb lane dimension should be widened to 13 feet. This will accommodate commuter-type bicyclists and will also prove beneficial to transit and truck operations. Although it is not a recommendation at this time, it is possible that if increasing usage by bicyclists is observed due to a general slowing of traffic speeds and increasing urbanization of the surrounding land uses, there may be a possibility of restriping for dedicated bicycle lanes by reducing the width of existing lanes, including the wider 13-foot outer lanes.

A key component of the recommendations that will support the pedestrian improvements and land use plan is comprehensive streetscape upgrades. While the design of these streetscapes has not been identified, it is recommended that they provide a unifying theme for Northside Drive. The streetscape elements such as street furniture and plantings may vary within the corridor, but elements such as traffic signal poles, street lights and pavement treatments should be consistent through the corridor to provide a clear sense of continuity and assist with navigation for those unfamiliar with the areas.

5.1.3 Roadway Recommendations

The roadway recommendations detailed below cover a wide range of improvements to the roadway portion of Northside Drive including its potential interface with I-20. Some of the short-term improvements are not discussed in detail in this section. For more information on those improvements, please see Chapter 6.

5.1.3.1 I-20 Access Improvements

The information generated herein did not establish a clear cost benefit basis for recommending improved access. The benefits in terms of increased access, improved travel conditions on a regional or corridor basis were not apparent in the study analysis, while it appeared that the costs would be quite high. At the same time public and agency sentiment for improved access were mixed with some concerned that it would encourage pass through trips from I-20 to I-75 and others seeing redevelopment opportunities and better access to existing destinations such as the AUC.

As noted in Chapter 4, the travel demand model used to study travel impacts for this study is limited in its ability to measure the potential impact of the improvements to access, because it does not measure psychological factors that may influence a driver's decision to use a particular



facility. Another limitation of this study process, was that the cost estimates developed for the access improvements assumed a worst case scenario, because limitations in available information and budget prevented conceptual engineering on a range of alternative approaches to constructing the access. It is possible that alternatives developed for consideration in this study can be refined to further lower the project cost.

It is recommended that a detailed study of all potential access options be undertaken in the near future. This study would need to address several key issues including conceptual engineering sufficient to establish the costs of all feasible options, the potential for closing of adjacent interchanges at McDaniel and Lee Streets to facilitate a new interchange and the potential impacts to traffic operations and travel patterns in the area and on a regional level. Due to the potential for closing existing access points as a part of the final solution, public involvement in this study would need to be significant.

One potential approach to completing this analysis would be for the GDOT to undertake this effort as part of the upcoming HOV study of I-20 West inside I-285. This would have the advantage of considering the new access as it relates to all of the interchanges along the facility.

5.1.3.2 New Travel Lanes

To accommodate future travel demand and the proposed transit improvements, new travel lanes on Northside Drive should to be added to bring the entire corridor up to a six lane cross section. In the southern end of the corridor, one northbound lane should be added from Larkin Street to Simpson Street. One lane in each direction should be added from 14th Street to I-75 in the northern end of the corridor. The general locations of the lane additions is shown on Figure 5-2 on the following page.

It should be noted that detailed concept, design, and engineering work must be undertaken to determine the exact locations of any additional right-of-way that may be necessary. Reconfiguration of existing lanes and on-road facilities, narrowing of lanes, utilization of all existing but unused right-of-way, etc., might be used as tools to gain an additional lane, in lieu of having to purchase right-of-way from private landowners. All of these options will be explored fully during the roadway and right-of-way planning process that would come after this high-level study is concluded.

In many cases, the addition of new travel lanes may make the resulting pavement width quite wide, especially when possible turn lanes and/or median are included. In these cases, roadway design must either make specific considerations to provide for safe and comfortable pedestrian crossing facilities, or the operational benefits of turn lanes must be weighed against the need for pedestrian safety and accessibility

In addition, many locations along the corridor are home to mature shade trees located very near the current roadway (for example, both the southwest and northeast corners of Northside Drive and Bishop Street). Right-of-way acquisition plans should strongly consider the value of these



trees to the community and the pedestrian environment when making recommendations regarding land to be acquired.

5.1.3.3 Intersection Reconfiguration

Early in the study process several intersections were identified as particularly difficult to navigate due to skewed angles or unusual configurations. It is recommended that these intersections be reconfigured to more traditional layouts. Specific intersections to be addressed are as follows:

- Consolidate Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14th Street into a single intersection;
- Remove Split on Northside Drive at Marietta Street; and
- Consolidate Northside Drive/North Avenue/Lambert Street into a single intersection.
- Prohibit northbound left turns onto Northside Drive from southbound Marietta Street (short term, signage only, see text below)

The skewed nature of the intersection of Marietta Street and Northside drive makes turning left from southbound Marietta Street to northbound Northside problematic. Although only a small percentage of cars make this turning movement, even this small number of such movements raises safety and congestion issues significantly. It is recommended that such left turns be prohibited via signage, and that additional signage be placed on southbound Marietta Street and Howell Mill Road to indicate that those wishing to travel northbound on Northside Drive should use Eighth Street, where a traffic signal is also recommended.

The location of these improvements is shown on Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 in Chapter 6.

5.1.3.4 New Roadways

Through the study process a few opportunities were identified for improving connectivity by adding new roads or extending existing ones. The location of these improvements is shown on Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 in Chapter 6. In addition to the new roadways described below there are also several related projects in the Upper Westside LCI. Please see that document for more details.

Ethel Street Extension

To provide better access to Home Park it is recommended that Ethel Street be extended east to Hampton Street. This extension should relieve some pressure on Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14th Street and Northside Drive/10th Street. It will also facilitate potentially closing Hemphill Street/14th Street in the future, should this become desirable.



Figure 5-2: New Travel Lanes



Herndon Homes Connections

In the event that Herndon Homes is redeveloped it is recommended that two north/south roadways be constructed from Johns Street to North Avenue. These roadways would allow for better internal access and reduce the demand on Northside Drive/North Avenue. If it would not interfere with the truck marshalling yard at the GWCC, it may be desirable to extend these roads as far south as the new Ivan Allen Boulevard, so that traffic can also be removed from Northside Drive/Simpson Street.

5.1.3.5 New Traffic Signals

To provide more improved opportunities for east west travel across Northside Drive and maintain access to parcels along Northside Drive it is recommended that new traffic signals be placed at Ethel Street and 8th Street. In addition to facilitating vehicle movements in the corridor, the traffic signals will also provide needed opportunities for pedestrian crossings in an area that is expected to have significant future pedestrian activity.

5.1.3.6 Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) and Signage Program at Dome and GWCC

It is recommended that in the short term, an Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) –based plan be developed for special events at the Georgia Dome and the Georgia World Congress Center. This system should utilize ITS elements to direct traffic along the roadways with least congestion before and after special events. In addition, the program already planned for signage improvements for the GWCC, Georgia Dome, Phillips Arena, and Centennial Park should be implemented. Neither of these programs should direct traffic onto secondary streets such as Howell Mill Road and Marietta Street.

5.1.4 Median and Access Management

Traffic flow and safety enhancements are a key component of the Corridor Transportation System. Access management including a median is recommended to help provide both smoother traffic flow and enhanced safety from fewer unanticipated turning movements across traffic in the corridor.

The major physical recommendation of the access management strategy is the construction of a median for the entire length of the corridor. Medians increase safety by reducing vehicle conflicts from left-turn movements and by providing refuge areas in the middle of the roadway for pedestrians crossing at intersections. In addition to safety benefits, medians play an important role in controlling access in a corridor. The median would have breaks at all signalized intersections to allow for turning movements. At critical pedestrian intersections, especially those with wider sections due to turn lanes it is recommended that the median be designed to provide a pedestrian refuge area.

In order to support the streetscape recommendations and beautify the corridor it is recommended that the median be landscaped and contain other visual enhancements as appropriate.



As shown in this picture, it is recommended that medians provide pedestrian refuges at intersections

Another important element of the access management strategy would be to sharply limit the number of curb cuts along Northside Drive as it redevelops. This is particularly critical in the vicinity of intersections, because there are already large numbers of turning movements, pedestrian activities in these locations. This will help improve traffic flow by reducing turning movements and will also contribute to transforming the corridor to a pedestrian-friendly environment. Transit operations will also benefit, because there will be fewer turn movements occurring in the travel lanes being used by transit vehicles. In order to maintain access to businesses and residences access points should be provided on side streets. There would also be a need for shared driveways, parking facilities and access roads. These access roads should be located within or behind developments, so that building fronts can abut the sidewalk.

A final component of the access management strategy will be to provide left-turn lanes at key intersections within the corridor. These left turn lanes will remove queued traffic from the flow of through traffic. It should be noted; however, that left-turn lanes should not necessarily be provided at all intersections. At some intersections, it may be desirable to prohibit left turns rather than widen the roadway section for turn lanes. This is particularly true in areas where heavy pedestrian and through traffic volumes are expected.

5.1.5 Transit

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is currently no local bus service running along the entire length of the corridor. Therefore, a MARTA local bus route serving the extent of the corridor is recommended in the short term.



As mentioned previously, the transit component is essential for enhancing mobility in the corridor. Therefore, bus rapid transit (BRT) is recommended in the medium term.

The BRT recommendation is discussed in detail below. More information is presented on this recommendation than on the other recommendations discussed in this section, because stakeholders and the general public indicated in the study process that they were unfamiliar with BRT and would like additional information. The details are provided to help the community envision the recommendations more completely.

BRT is a flexible rubber-tired transit mode designed to replicate rail service that may be applied in a variety of operating environments to include mixed traffic, exclusive busways and HOV lanes. It combines stations, Intelligent Transportation Systems, vehicles and services into a permanent facility. BRT applications are tailored to the specific conditions and travel needs within a corridor, and the following combination of elements is recommended for the Northside Drive Corridor:

- Transit Priority — Since transit vehicles are recommended to generally travel in mixed-traffic along Northside Drive, it will be essential to find ways to give transit vehicles priority over general traffic when possible, and when it would not greatly reduce other primary transportation goals, such as pedestrian or motorist safety. Such priority treatments can dramatically improve transit service, and ensure that transit service remains a strong and competitive transportation mode choice.
 - Signalization (Signal Pre-emption) – Traffic signal systems that give priority treatment to on-road transit vehicles at intersections can greatly improve operating characteristics. A variety of techniques can be used to increase the priority of transit vehicles including: 1) extending the green phase, 2) inserting a green phase, and 3) reducing the red phase on the approach that the transit vehicle travels. The transit priority system could take advantage of the automatic vehicle location equipment already installed on some MARTA equipment.
 - Roadway – Roadway priority treatments can significantly improve the operating characteristics of transit. These treatments provide many of the benefits of dedicated right-of-way transit, at significantly less cost, and generally without having to acquire additional right-of-way. When planned well, they can also use existing right-of-way very efficiently.

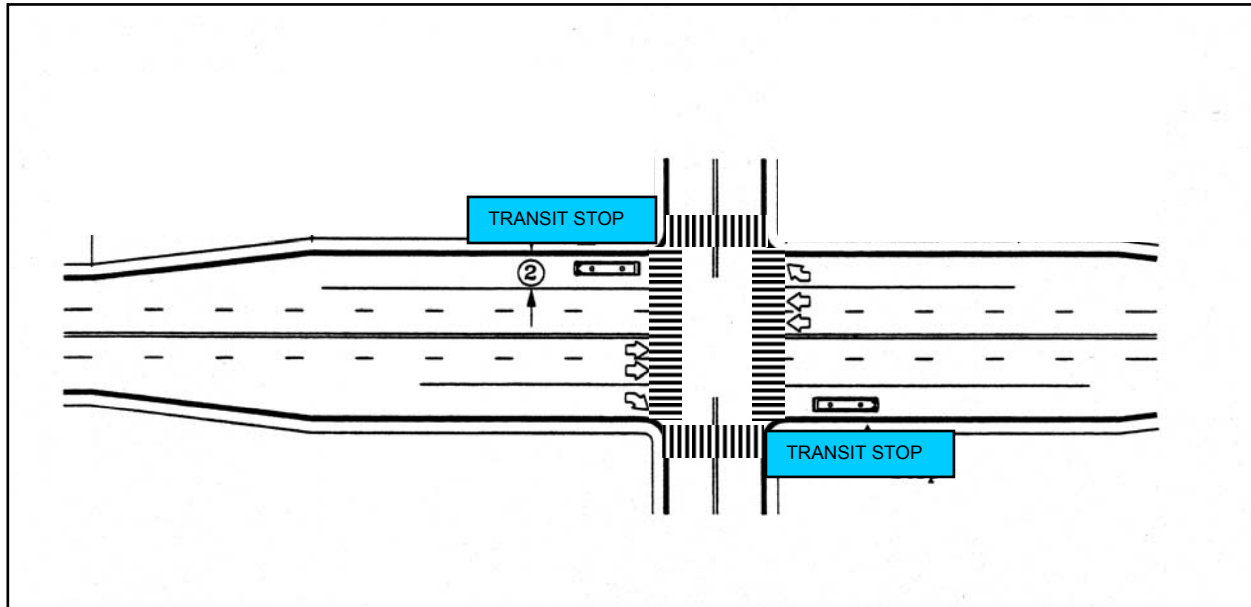
For example, such a treatment may involve using an existing turn lane or even reducing median width at selected locations on the corridor to provide an exclusive transit lane so that transit vehicles can bypass queued traffic. It is recommended to combine roadway treatments with signalization treatments and signage to further reduce delay, allow traffic to flow smoothly and safely, make sure pedestrians are clearly informed of locations with transit vehicle priority (for example, “Cross on Green Signal Only – Transit Vehicles May Continue When General Traffic is Stopped.”) and to ensure that drivers are similarly informed about transit vehicle priority. See Figure 5-3 for an illustration of a transit vehicle



priority concept using turn lanes to give transit vehicles priority without adding additional pavement width.

- Far Side of Intersection Stations – Location of BRT stations on the far side of the intersection relative to the direction of travel so that buses cross the intersection before stopping. This reduces the chance that a bus will be delayed an extra signal cycle due to dwell time at a near side station.
- Skip Stop and/or Express Service – Modification and/or addition of bus routes in the corridor that serve a limited number of stops. Skip Stop service typically stops every 0.75 to 1 miles as compared to local service, which may have stops every 0.25 miles. Express service stops even less frequently than Skip Stop service, perhaps at the endpoints of the corridor only. These services may take the place of existing local service or may be additive in nature.

Figure 5-3: One Example of a Transit Priority Treatment using Existing Turn Lanes





BRT Stations/Superstops – Station design is a critical factor in attracting transit riders, especially those who have other transportation modes at their disposal. At their best, BRT stations are designed to improve both bus operations and the customer experience. Bus operational enhancements are achieved through prepayment of fares and designs aimed at reducing boarding and alighting times such as raising the station a few feet above grade to match the bus boarding door level. Customer amenities should include:

- A sheltered area (covered waiting area);
- More seating;
- Climate control;
- Real-time next bus arrival information displayed on kiosks or variable message signs;
- Detailed schedule and route information;
- Newspaper racks;
- Trash receptacles; and
- Ticket vending machines.

Please see Figure 5-4 for some example pictures of BRT stations.

- **Service Branding** – Development of a distinctive identity for the BRT service including a unique paint scheme and logo for use on vehicles and bus stations/shelters, and a unique brand name for the service. In Los Angeles and Contra Costa County, California, BRT service is known as Rapid Bus. Marketing to establish the identity of the service within the community of potential users is also recommended.
- **Specialized Vehicles** – Bus Rapid Transit may be operated with a variety of bus vehicles tailored to the service needs, however, it is desirable to operate bus vehicles that provide a high-level of customer convenience and rapid loading. In many cases articulated vehicles are needed to provide adequate capacity. To speed loading of vehicles, bus floor heights are coordinated with station platforms to provide level floor boarding. Buses may also be equipped with automatic fare collection equipment, multiple boarding locations and wide aisles. Other enhancements may include onboard passenger information systems that provide real time travel information to customers.

The recommended BRT facility including conceptual station locations is shown in Figure 5-5.

5.1.5.1 BRT Stations

On Northside Drive it is recommended that the majority of stations be neighborhood-oriented, with 16 local stations or superstops and 2 transit transfer stations. In general, the local stations should be designed for walk-up access and require a minimal amount of right-of-way. At major cross streets, the local stations may need to accommodate some transfer activity, which would increase the size of the station at that location.



Figure 5-4: Example Neighborhood Type BRT Stations





Figure 5-4 continued:





Figure 5-5: BRT Facility on Northside Drive



17th Street Transit Transfer Station

One station should be highlighted, because it should have a unique function within the corridor. The 17th Street station is recommended to serve as transit transfer station. This station could provide the opportunity for transfer between automobiles, passenger and commuter rail facilities, express bus services and the Bus Rapid Transit facility recommended on Northside Drive. The station location is adjacent to the existing Amtrak line, which is also the planned alignment for commuter rail from Athens into downtown Atlanta. Express bus services from Cobb County also could be routed down Northside Drive and then across 17th Street into midtown Atlanta. Given the potential interaction at this station, it is recommended that it be developed to facilitate these transfer activities and perhaps provide structured parking for long-term inter-city passengers if it is needed.

5.1.5.2 Long-term Transit Approach

In the future, there may be the potential to convert or augment the recommended BRT facility with light rail transit (LRT) or other fixed guideway service as appropriate to serve future transit needs. At this time no recommendation is made in this area pending the outcome of the MARTA Inner Core Alternatives Analysis study. The long-term transit recommendation on Northside Drive should allow for seamless integration with the facilities recommended by the Inner Core Study.

5.1.6 Bridges

In order to accommodate the proposed typical section, it is recommended that several railroad bridges be lengthened to provide additional width beneath them. Traveling north to south through the corridor these bridges are as follows:

- CSX railroad overpass of Northside Drive south of Bellemeade Street;
- Norfolk Southern railroad overpass of Northside Drive south of 17th Street; and
- Norfolk Southern railroad overpass of Northside Drive south of Chappel Street.

In addition to the railroad bridge improvements, it is recommended that the deck of the bridge on Northside Drive over the Norfolk Southern railroad south of Marietta Street be widened. This should be completed as part of the bridge upgrade already programmed in the ARC 2005-2010 TIP. The location of these improvements is shown on Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 in Chapter 6.

5.1.7 On-street Parking

Marketing experts agree that having some visible on-street parking is essential to support viable storefront retail. In addition, on-street parking dramatically increases the safety and the perception of a safety in the pedestrian environment. In support of the proposed pedestrian improvements and retail land use recommendations, on street parking should be added to the corridor where needed. This parking should be parallel to the curb and should occur in mid-block locations only. The parking should be provided by adding additional pavement width, so



that six travel lanes are maintained throughout the corridor. Finally, along Northside Drive, this parking should be permitted only during off peak times. Strict enforcement of this regulation is required to implement on-street parking. Wherever possible, cross streets should be used to provide on street parking because the spaces can remain available even during peak times. Much success has been achieved recently in urbanizing areas of the City of Atlanta such as Midtown and Buckhead with having major landowners donate the ROW for on-street parking purposes, in exchange for a commensurate increase in allowable development intensities equal to what was lost with the donated land.

5.2 Land Use and Urban Design Framework

Land use recommendations were developed for properties within the focus area along the Northside Drive corridor to illustrate the types and intensity of development appropriate for the corridor and surrounding communities. Land use recommendations were generated from input gathered at a series of open public forums, core team meetings, project management meetings. Additionally, land use recommendations were informed by the market demand analysis generated by the planning team.

Throughout this planning process, stakeholders emphasized the importance of developing the Northside Drive corridor with a diversity of uses and identified areas with a high level of activity at key intersections along the corridor. These key intersections will potentially serve as local and regional attractors by building off current development momentum in the area. Figure 5-6 shows these potential activity nodes. Activity nodes have an urban character that can accommodate higher density development and a mixture of uses including commercial and residential, support alternative transportation options and function as gateways and orientation points into adjacent neighborhoods.

These activity nodes and development opportunities identified in the Issues and Opportunities section of this report were used to formulate the land use character of the entire corridor. Like the Issues and Opportunities analysis, the land use recommendations are illustrated and described in the five zones. These illustrations are intended to be representative of the potential 25-year build-out. While the City of Atlanta land use categories are consistent within the five zones, each zone is designed and characterized differently based on the existing and surrounding urban context, development opportunities, and to support various market niches.

The recommended land use pattern for the entire corridor encourages increased density with various levels of intensity for properties fronting Northside Drive. With increased density recommended, it is important to protect the adjacent single-family neighborhoods by stepping down the building heights as development approaches the residential areas. This transitional strategy will preserve and protect existing stable residential communities adjacent to Northside Drive while offering land use options along the corridor that support the transportation scenarios recommended in this study.



In order to ensure the implementation of the future development, it is necessary to make changes to the City of Atlanta's 15 Year Land Use Maps in the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The land use recommendations, overall character of the area, urban design strategies for each zone and descriptions of potential activity nodes are detailed on the following pages.

Updating the allowable future land uses is critical to the success of this plan. Transportation modeling was based on a consensus about future land uses that will accommodate impending growth, support mixed-use development, and strike a balance between absorbing future growth and minimizing strain on existing single-family neighborhoods.

Since the officially designated 15-year land uses strictly control the allowable zoning districts to which a property may be changed, the 15 Year Future Land Use Plan Map must be amended to support proposed zoning changes. Figures in the following sections ("Framework Plans") give the recommended changes for each of the five corridor zones.

A Note on the Open Space Land Use Category

Areas identified by the "Open Space" (OS) future land use category indicate recommendations for either public acquisition or purchase of easements. Note that the Open Space future land use designation does not prohibit development on these parcels, and any zoning district is allowed. These areas are identified as having the potential for acquisition in the future – actual acquisition of such property depends upon many factors such as funding availability, cost, priority, availability of funds to maintain the site, etc., and may or may not actually occur.



Figure 5-6: Potential Activity Nodes Summary



5.2.1 Deering Road Zone

Located in the northern portion of the Northside Drive corridor near I-75 and the 17th Street entrance to the Atlantic Station mixed-use development, the Deering Road zone is the ideal location for increased density and activity. Figure 5-7 shows the recommendations for this zone.

5.2.1.1 *Land Use*

In the north portion of this zone the established single-family neighborhoods of Loring Heights and Berkeley Park, office parks, low density commercial, and low density industrial uses surround the corridor. Increased activity in this area due to Atlantic Station presents an opportunity to reinforce the office and commercial market with additional office parks that include ground floor neighborhood oriented retail fronting Northside Drive.

South of the railroad overpass, Northside Drive experiences a significant grade change with a number of warehousing and industrial facilities that front the City of Atlanta Waterworks facility on the west. This area is envisioned as a potential mixed-use development site with medium density residential and retail and commercial frontage along Northside Drive that complements the commercial services anticipated at Atlantic Station. Commercial and office development along the east would integrate additional activity in the area with an emphasis on enhancing the pedestrian environment.

The City of Atlanta Waterworks facility is potentially one of the greatest amenities in this area. There currently exists inaccessible open space that surrounds the facility. By relocating the protective fencing closer to the treatment facilities, the open space could be enjoyed by the surrounding communities as a passive park with trails, benches, and lighting to enhance pedestrian circulation and activity.

5.2.1.2 *Urban Design*

The character of this zone emphasizes enhancing the pedestrian realm while considering vehicular traffic in this zone is bound to increase with the completion of Atlantic Station and its proximity to I-75. Therefore it is important to provide protection and buffering for pedestrians with streetscaping, wide sidewalks, and gateways at Bellemeade Street, Deering Road, and 17th Street. The recommended building heights within this zone would average 8 to 10 stories on the west where there is opportunity to increase density with new mixed-use development. This mixed-use development should include inter-parcel connectivity and plazas. Low density commercial development of sites to the east with 4 to 6 story buildings close to the street with a gradual step down in building heights as development approaches adjacent single-family residential is also recommended.

5.2.1.3 *Activity Nodes*

Within this zone two future activity nodes are recommended as described in the subsections below.



Bellemeade

A mixed-use development site including retail and residential uses is currently under construction at the location of the former Castlegate Hotel in the Bellemeade activity node. This node will support the increased demand for retail services and contribute to the diversity of residential types to the area.

17th Street

This node would support higher density, mixed-use activity. As a dominant entrance into the Atlantic Station development, this would serve as an anchor for a potential transit transfer station accessing Atlanta Station and other local and regional transit services. In addition, this node is potentially a signature public space for the corridor.



Figure 5-7: Framework Plan – Deering Road Zone



5.2.2 10th Street Zone

This area south of 17th Street extending to the intersection of Marietta Street and Northside Drive addresses the historic Home Park neighborhood, the distinctive Marietta Street corridor and Georgia Tech. Despite its surrounding context, orientation and industrial heritage, the land use and urban design fabric has glaring gaps and suffers from lack of investment, visual appeal and an unfriendly pedestrian environment. Figure 5-8 shows the recommendations for this zone.

5.2.2.1 Land Use

The plan recommends a mixed-use district on the west within the 10th Street Zone that encourages higher density development with pedestrian-oriented retail, housing, live-work units and offices while encouraging adaptive reuse strategies for existing buildings when possible. Northside Drive between 8th Street and Marietta Street presents an opportunity as a key gateway along the corridor that is perhaps the most visible section of the study area with a unique roadway configuration. This area is envisioned as high-density mixed-use activity to the west, as Georgia Tech plans a long term expansion to the east and has opportunities for long term development and open space preservation by reconfiguring the north and south bound lanes of Northside Drive.

5.2.2.2 Urban Design

The urban design character of this area emphasizes building on the historic fabric of existing industrial structures by creating and expanding the emerging loft district and creating a high quality pedestrian environment with inter-parcel connectivity. These features and improvements emphasize streetscapes that would assist in transforming this auto-dominated section of the corridor into a street with pedestrian accessible public and private spaces and gateways at key intersections including 14th Street and Marietta Street. The plan recommends improvements to the east-west connectivity of this zone with new vehicular or pedestrian connections at Ethel and 8th Streets. By reconfiguring Hemphill at 14th Street, an opportunity to create an urban village and major gateway into Home Park with 4 to 6 stories recommended building heights exists. Development on the west side of Northside Drive would have a higher intensity of mixed-use structures ranging from 8 to 10 stories.

5.2.2.3 Activity Nodes

Two activity nodes are proposed within the 10th Street Zone. Both of these nodes already have existing development consistent with a central area.

14th Street

This node is envisioned as a higher intensity of retail, office, multi-family residential and adaptive reuse that builds on the momentum of Atlantic Station while maintaining a neighborhood character.

Marietta Street

This activity node takes advantage of activity from Georgia Tech and Marietta Street and envisions eliminating the northbound split alignment in order to provide new development



opportunities. As illustrated in Figure 5-9, a higher intensity mixed-use district with an internal street network, expansion area for Georgia Tech, civic spaces and a monumental gateway in recognition of the surrender of Atlanta would activate this key intersection.

While there is a strong desire on the part of local stakeholders to envision the details of a redesign of the Northside Drive/Marietta Street intersection that are a potential outcome of an abandonment of Tech Parkway, such specifics are not within the scope of this study. However, since the intersection is a critical activity node and represents a significant opportunity for intersection, corridor, and community improvement, the planning study included a dedicated workshop to focus on this area.

While it is possible to sketch a desirable detailed plan from a purely urban design perspective, this study recognizes that significant and complex topographical, engineering, and cost analyses are required in order to do a thorough and pragmatic alternatives analysis. Results of these analyses may render an *a priori* design scheme unfeasible. Therefore, this study recommends executing such a study to yield a properly understood, feasible, and defensible master plan for the corridor from Marietta Street to 8th Street.

In anticipation of such a study, this plan includes a sketch of a basic framework concept that meets stakeholder goals. It also identifies options and alternatives that can then be passed into a detailed analysis.

The detailed design should accommodate the following objectives:

- Provide significant park and plaza spaces accessible to all residents, workers, and visitors to the area. These public spaces do not necessarily have to be contiguous, and should serve a variety of active and passive uses and functions within the community.
- Provide a gateway to the northern section of Northside Drive.
- Allow for the possibility of Georgia Tech expansion of facilities.
- Increase east-west connectivity for walkers, bicyclists, and automobiles.
- Significantly improve safety at Marietta Street/Northside Drive intersection.
- Provide adequate automobile and transit throughput.
- Accommodate at-grade transit on both Northside Drive and Marietta Street.

Other observations are:

- Providing any developable land at all will require a very significant (and most likely expensive) land fill component -- essentially reversing the work that was done to carve out Tech Parkway.



- A Northside Drive realignment should reconsolidate the northbound and southbound legs of the roadway for consistency with the rest of the corridor segment and urban environment, and to provide for greatly enhanced safety for all transportation modes.
- Locating the realigned roadway in the area between the current northbound and southbound legs is advantageous because it provides the possibility for several stated goals: neighborhood commercial/residential expansion space, Georgia Tech facilities expansion, significant park/plaza space, visual opportunities such as gateways, and significantly increased safety at the Marietta St. intersection.
- A realigned Northside Drive should not be designed as a boundary for land uses/intensities/neighborhoods. It's design should be one that unites both sides of the urban boulevard. Georgia Tech expansion, while most likely to be focused on the east side of the boulevard, should be able to happen on the west side of the boulevard as well. The converse should also hold: the growing neighborhood, while focusing on opportunities on the west of the boulevard, should be able to expand on the east side.



Figure 5-8: Framework Plan – 10th Street Road Zone



Figure 5-9: Concept Plan – Marietta Street Node



5.2.3 North Avenue Zone

The North Avenue Zone is a mixture of small industrial activities with low intensity commercial uses, low-income housing and surface parking from Marietta Street to Simpson Road. Adjacent to the area is the English Avenue neighborhood to the west, with the Northyards Business Park and Georgia Tech research facilities to the east. Both Northyards and Georgia Tech serve as key employment destinations in the area. Figure 5-10 shows the recommendations for this zone.

5.2.3.1 *Land Use*

The land use strategy for this area encourages integration of dense housing and neighborhood-oriented commercial in key locations with street frontage. In addition, underutilized property north of Herndon Homes presents an opportunity for an expansion of the Northyards Business Park that would provide additional employment. With AHA's commitment to mixed-income communities, the redevelopment of Herndon Homes may be on the horizon and would create new housing options for the area as well.

5.2.3.2 *Urban Design*

The urban design character for this zone encourages neighborhood and pedestrian friendly environment along Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway, North Avenue, Simpson Road and Northside Drive with sidewalk improvements, streetscapes, and gateways improving access into surrounding neighborhoods. The improved pedestrian environment suggested in the northern zones should continue in the North Avenue zone. The urban design fabric, particularly at the major east-west arterials that include Donald Lee Hollowell and Simpson Road, suggests buildings averaging 6 to 8 stories. The center of the zone surrounding North Avenue recommends building heights of 4 to 6 stories that step back in height as they approach single-family residential due to its proximity to the heart of the English Avenue community.

5.2.3.3 *Activity Nodes*

As in the previously described zones, there are two activity nodes recommended in this area, as described below.

Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway

This area is envisioned as dense mixed-use development with neighborhood retail fronting Northside Drive and residential units above.

Simpson Road

The Simpson Road activity node is envisioned as new medium density residential fronting Northside Drive with ground floor retail. Development in this area should complement the character of the recently completed mixed-use development by Antioch Church.



Figure 5-10: Framework Plan – North Avenue Zone



5.2.4 Vine City MARTA Zone

This zone includes the GWCC, the Georgia Dome and the Vine City MARTA Station. The Vine City single-family neighborhood is adjacent to the west side of Northside Drive. Figure 5-11 shows the recommendations for this zone.

5.2.4.1 *Land Use*

The Vine City MARTA zone is envisioned as a mixture of sports and convention activities on the east side of Northside Drive that is supported by residential, office and a retail district to the west. A variety of housing types are recommended that include the existing Vine City single-family neighborhood, proposed town homes and multi-story residential units. The land use recommendation for this zone is redevelopment of existing surface parking on the three blocks south of Spencer Street. Based on the previous Vine City Redevelopment Plan, this development opportunity promotes increased density surrounding the MARTA station with residential and office uses that include ground floor retail and internal parking decks. Centralized open space and plazas are planned on each of these development sites with minimal setbacks on Northside Drive, internal streets and pedestrian facilities to enhance the pedestrian environment.

To provide additional opportunities for conference, retail and parking for the Georgia World Congress Center, a mixed-use commercial and conference development is recommended on the east side of Northside Drive on existing surface parking. This development would complement and support the regional conference and sports destinations as well as the surrounding Vine City and Castleberry Hill neighborhoods.

5.2.4.2 *Urban Design*

The Vine City MARTA zone calls for four new gateways to the area at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Carter Street, Magnolia Street and Simpson Road. Streetscape improvements including wide pedestrian sidewalks, lighting, benches and other elements would improve the pedestrian environment. To be compatible with adjacent single-family residential, the recommended building height for future development is 4 to 6 stories.

5.2.4.3 *Vine City MARTA Station Activity Node*

The activity center envisioned for the Vine City MARTA Zone is concentrated around the Vine City MARTA station. This center possesses an excellent access to regional destinations including the Georgia World Congress Center and the Georgia Dome and would also serve as a potential regional transit transfer station to support increased density.



Figure 5-11: Framework Plan – Vine City MARTA Zone



5.2.5 McDaniel Street Zone

With a mix of land uses that includes redevelopment mixed-use projects, vacant land, a public park and multifamily housing, this zone is quite diverse at this time. Figure 5-12 shows the recommendations for this zone.

5.2.5.1 *Land Use*

The McDaniel Street zone is envisioned as a culmination of the corridor and would contain various land uses. Building off the momentum of the H.J. Russell Legacy mixed-use development, the eastern side of Northside Drive is envisioned as a mixed-used district that serves the Atlanta University Center (AUC) and Castleberry Hill as a residential, arts and academic village. To the west, medium and high density residential is recommended to provide additional housing options for the area. Surrounding the McDaniel Street intersection, the underutilized industrial properties could potentially serve as a major gateway to the Northside Drive corridor from the south with the adaptive reuse of industrial structures, expansion areas for the Atlanta University Center institutions and new mixed-use development.

5.2.5.2 *Urban Design*

Serving as the gateway to the Northside Drive corridor from the south, the urban design character of this area should be reinforced with streetscape improvements that promote pedestrian movements. In addition, bringing buildings up to the street with an average height of 4 to 6 stories with parking in the rear will improve the pedestrian environment.

5.2.5.3 *Activity Nodes*

The activity nodes in this area are not centered on Northside Drive, but are adjacent to it and within the more general corridor boundaries.

Fair Street & Park

This potential activity node in proximity to the Atlanta University Center and the new H.J. Russell Legacy mixed-use complex is envisioned as residential mixed-use with an arts and entertainment function. Along with improvements to an existing park, this area will address the needs of the AUC population and the Castleberry Hill neighborhood.

McDaniel & Whitehall

This node is a gateway into the Northside Drive corridor from the south and is intended to anchor pedestrian scale residential and commercial that serves the AUC and the Castleberry Hill neighborhood. Additionally, this area presents opportunities for future expansion of the AUC institutions.



Figure 5-12: Framework Plan – McDaniel Street Zone



5.3 Short-term Improvements

Development of a package of short-term (by 2010) improvements involved significant input received through agency coordination meetings with GDOT and other regional planning partners. The specific improvement strategies that are contained in this package are based on the identified corridor needs and baseline travel data presented earlier in the report. The study team performed detailed windshield surveys to identify deficient corridor conditions and opportunities to implement cost-effective improvement projects, and these projects were presented and reviewed at several public meetings. The following is a list of the recommended short-term improvements. See Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 for locations.

- Actuate and implement timing plans for all 18 traffic signals along Northside Drive.
- Upgrade all 18 traffic signal controllers along Northside Drive to the 2070 model.
- Develop an ITS (Intelligent Traffic Systems) special event plan for Georgia Dome and GWCC events.
- Implement existing signage improvement plan for the GWCC/Georgia Dome/Centennial Park/Philips Arena.
- Add local MARTA route running the length of the Northside Drive Corridor.
- Extend median on Northside Drive from CSX railroad bridge to Holmes Street.
- Extend sidewalks along both sides of Northside Drive from Trabert to Bellemeade.
- Add traffic signal at Northside Drive/8th Street.
- Add west and eastbound left turn lanes on 10th Street at Northside Drive.
- Remove northbound right turn channel on Northside Drive at 10th Street.
- Repair pedestrian signal button on NW corner of Northside Drive/10th Street.
- Repair pedestrian signal head on SE corner of Northside/10th Street.
- Add crosswalk across south leg of Northside Drive/10th Street.
- Repair pavement and sidewalk on eastbound approach of 10th Street at Northside Drive
- Remove Hemphill leg between 14th Street and Northside Drive
- Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14th Street into single intersection.
- Make Hemphill Street right-in-right-out at 14th Street.
- Repair sidewalk on Northside Drive at the southeast corner of Northside Drive/14th Street.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/14th Street.
- Add eastbound left turn lane on 14th Street at Northside Drive/14th Street.
- Signalize driveway that is the westbound leg of Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway
- Improve signage for turn only lane onto D.L. Hollowell Parkway.
- At Northside Drive/Marietta Street, replace striped out area of pavement adjacent to southbound leg of Northside Drive with a raised concrete median to guide drivers through the intersection.
- Prohibit eastbound left turn from Marietta Street to Northside Drive, in conjunction with additional signage on approaches as described elsewhere in this section.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/Marietta Street.
- Add new directional signage for Northside Drive on both approaches to Marietta Street.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/North Avenue.
- Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/North Avenue/Lambert Street into a single intersection including adding turning lanes as needed.
- Implement improved pedestrian barriers at Georgia Dome between MLK Jr Dr. and Simpson St. during events.
- Repaint crosswalks at Northside Drive/Simpson Street.
- Add directional signage to I-20 between C hapel St. and Fair St.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/McDaniel Street.
- Remove traffic signal at Northside Drive/Mitchell Street.